

HOW TO BE A SUSTAINABLE SCOT



A Student-Written Guide

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Thanks to....

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The Sustainability Office and Campus Life

Disclaimer:

We have written this guidebook to inspire and empower students, especially first-year-students, to work towards a more just and sustainable future. However, we recognize that we cannot capture the diversity of opinions and visions held by students at Macalester. We do not claim to speak for the entire student body or the institution itself, for doing so would not fit our beliefs in democracy. We welcome all discussions on the content, framework, and intent of the guidebook, and we would love to hear whatever thoughts you have.

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What is Sustainability?

Contributors: Timothy DenHerder-Thomas and Rob Jentsch

Sustainability is often defined as “a way of living that supports not only our present needs but those of future generations as well.” In essence, it is the ability for a system to continue indefinitely. We suggest that a more concise definition might be “One World.”

You see, sustainability is a concept that encompasses justice, the environment, economics, and more – “pieces” that not only fit together, but cannot exist separate of each other. Achieving sustainability requires challenging common divisions between present and future, local and global, learning and doing, and self and world.

Pretty cool stuff, right? Sustainability is relevant to all parts of our lives, as this booklet aims to describe. But before we delve into all of that, let’s talk about what you have to do with this.

For some reason, you’re at Macalester. Perhaps you feel that Macalester might prepare you best for the future, or perhaps you simply hear the food is good (and hey, it’s not half bad). Whatever it was, you chose this little Twin Cities school for a liberal arts education. We think that’s important.

The root of the word “liberal,” in the context of “liberal arts” refers to liberty and freedom. “Art” refers to the craft of creativity. A liberal arts education, then, is all about creating freedom; gaining skills that allow you to think expansively, and directly translate your ideas into practice. It is about building your (and our) capacity to dream and to do. It encourages us not to investigate only the way the world is but to understand the structures upon which we will create the world we *want*.

Rather than seeing college solely as a door to “the future,” in which we slowly become “real people,” we see it as a place to engage and change our situation now. We learn more about ourselves and the

world by engaging both than we do by separating self from world and just studying it.

This guide is our invitation to you to embrace a community of learning and teaching through inspired action. We're challenged to enact sustainability – to see and thus live out “one world,” to find a way to live that is about everything working together, instead of undermining ‘pieces’ that we ultimately depend on.

We think it is best to look at our time at Macalester and its many academic disciplines, student organizations and opportunities not as a series of roofs to fit within but as platforms upon which we create. No matter what major(s) or entry point(s) you choose, the world we need and want is one, and we can all lift each other up.

As you read through this guide, we hope you are able to recognize the interconnectedness of all that lies within the scope of sustainability, and that you can start to see what opportunities you have to live it.

Re-Energizing Macalester

Contributor: Kai Bosworth

Our Electricity

The electricity that we use at Macalester comes mainly from coal, which is the cheapest and most polluting electricity source. Coal is directly linked to global warming, acid rain, asthma, the destruction of Appalachian lands, and mercury poisoning.

We must first understand that efficiency and conservation are the most achievable and smart ways to reduce our coal use, but we must also look to clean, renewable energy as a solution. By switching to renewables, we can promote local economic prosperity by placing this critical resource in the hands of the communities who use it. You can help by locating and assessing clean energy opportunities for the college!

The Heating System

Macalester has a central boiler under the Fine Arts building which burns natural gas and fuel oil. It emits 40% of Macalester's carbon emissions. This boiler sends steam to each building, which heats a closed-loop pipe system that runs through your rooms. Turning down the valve in your room reduces the amount of hot water going through your pipes, not the temperature - which is managed on the building level by Facilities.

There are many ways that we can use the heat that we get more efficiently, but for a place that gets as cold as Macalester, we have a lot of problems that can only be solved by revamping the entire system. With a little ingenuity and a lot of planning, we can produce our own heating using systems like geothermal and solar water heating.

Zapping Our Energy Consumption

- Share appliances with your roommate and eliminate appliances that are unnecessary or wasteful.
- Plug all your electric devices into a surge protector and turn it off when you leave the room. *Anything* that is plugged in uses electricity!
- Consider unplugging your mini-fridge – it may account for up to 50% of the energy use in your dorm room.
- Turn off or hibernate your computer, especially overnight.
- Use less hot water – take shorter showers and wash your clothes with warm or cold water.
- Wash clothes with cold water, make sure you have a full load and air-dry whenever possible.
- Light only the space you're working in, and use a compact fluorescent light bulb.
- In the winter, keep your windows closed, your blinds open and your heater on low (or off!). It will get warm enough!

The Clean Energy Revolving Fund (CERF)

Many projects which enhance sustainability also save a lot of money: many can pay back their original cost many times over. The biggest barrier to implementation, however, is the up-front cost.

At Macalester, we created the Clean Energy Revolving Fund (CERF) to empower long-term, student-driven sustainability. Currently \$100,000, the fund is designed for projects which promise quantifiable savings or revenue while making Macalester a leader in campus sustainability (especially with regard to energy and global warming solutions). The savings or revenue from those projects then pays back the fund, enabling it to launch even bigger projects. Learn more at www.macalester.edu/cerf.

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Contributors: Hannah Wydeven and Callie Thuma

Just as we use material resources unsustainably, we often also act in ways that our own bodies cannot continue to support. The demands of our busy lives may lead us to deny ourselves the proper rest, nutrition, and exercise that we need to stay strong and healthy. How many of us have pulled an all-nighter, pushing through exhaustion with caffeine? Living sustainably means learning to respect our minds and bodies. Our ability to take care of ourselves directly impacts our happiness, productivity, and ability to care for others. What does your body need to continue to function at its best? Do you honor these needs?

Balance is crucial. We all have many commitments and it can be challenging to organize our time. Find what is important to you. Learn to say “no.” When pressure mounts, connect with some friends, enjoy a favorite physical activity, or take some quiet time to unwind. Prioritize your physical, mental, and social health.

It’s easy to put your relationships aside under the pressure of school work. However, your friendships are one of the most important parts of your Mac experience. Support your friends and be there to help each other stay happy and healthy. Romantic relationships can sometimes feel intense and overwhelming. Take time for yourself to gain clarity over your emotions, and always be honest with your partner(s).

Maintaining your sexual health is a key factor in keeping your wellness in balance. Using safe practices and being open with your sexual partner(s) will help you feel comfortable with your body and sexuality. Always use protection when you engage in sexual activity – and don’t ever feel embarrassed about keeping your body safe. Only you know when something doesn’t feel right, so don’t be afraid to stand up for yourself. Protect yourself from unsafe sexual situations by being aware of your boundaries and trusting the people you are with. Drinking happens in college, but being under

the influence doesn't mean that sex will be better or less emotional. Balance your life by understanding how sex makes you feel, and recognize when you have unhealthy sexual habits.

Stress can hurt your body and slow your mind. When you feel overwhelmed by your workload, take some time out and relax. Eat something nutritious and use healthy sources of energy. Sleep is necessary to the maintenance of your brain and body; get plenty of it to avoid overworking yourself.

Health and Wellness Resources on Campus

- General medical needs at the Health and Wellness Center
- Free Mental Health Counseling
- Fitness classes and exercise at the Leonard Center
- Athletics: varsity, club and intramural teams
- Health information at the Wellness Lab

Outside Resources (anonymous and safe)

- Family Tree Clinic: STI testing, birth control
- Planned Parenthood on Ford Parkway

The Macalester Wellness 5K Run/Walk

Each year Mac students have the chance to participate in a 5K Run/Walk on campus. Students of all ability levels can join in, because you don't have to be an athlete to be fit. The 5K is a great way to set personal fitness goals for yourself, and allow for some personal reflection time while you train. To keep fit mentally and physically, it's important to start healthy habits, like exercising.

When you keep your body in balance, you feel happier in the rest of your life. Sign

up for this year's wellness

5K and start

working towards

your fitness goals.

www.macalester.edu/health



Are We There Yet?

Contributor: Aaron Brown

The transportation sector is 20% of America's greenhouse gasses (22% for Macalester). Fortunately, students at Macalester have ample opportunities to utilize alternative, sustainable modalities of transportation. In addition to choosing more sustainable ways to move themselves around campus and the cities, many are taking additional steps to address the way we perceive and use transportation. Students are working to bring biodiesel to campus, reduce the number of parking lots, and advocate alternative transportation. Join these efforts and leave that car at home!

Metro Transit

A strong public transit system, such as the Twin Cities Metro Transit, is an essential ingredient for the well-being and economic stability of the huge numbers of people who rely on it. The Twin Cities have one 12 mile Light Rail line (with another along University Avenue due in 2014), 130 bus lines, and a daily ridership of 240,000.

Metro Transit offers a safe, cheap, and energy efficient way for students to get around; for instance, you can get from campus to the airport at one-tenth the cost of a taxi. Thanks to the President's Climate Commitment Committee, you can purchase half-price transit passes at the Info Desk in the Campus Center. You can plan trips at www.metrotransit.org.

Biking



The Twin Cities are very bike friendly. Minneapolis, for example, has the second highest rates of commuter cycling in the country, and up to 30% of bikers ride all winter long! On average, commuting 10 miles a day by bike can help you avoid \$8,000 in costs, 3,500 lbs in greenhouse gas emissions and 30 lbs of fat each

year – in other words, you can fight climate change, debt, *and* the “Freshman Fifteen.” Minneapolis is currently adding more bike boulevards, trails, and signage, and all buses have bike racks. Be sure to check out Summit Avenue, the Mississippi River, and the Midtown Greenway.

Looking to buy a bike? Head over to Sibley Bike Depot, a local bike co-op that will sell you a reliable used bike for cheap and help you learn to fix your ride. If you need a bike immediately, check out MacBike’s free Bike Share Program (with bikes, helmets, locks, and maps), which operates out of the Info Desk, and often sells subsidized bike locks. The campus has abundant bike parking, but bring/get a sturdy U-lock; campus security is improving, but we’ve had a rash of bike thefts in the past few years.



Walking

The oldest form of transportation, Macalester’s neighborhood receives a “Very Walkable” score of 82 from walkscore.com. A short walk in all directions from Macalester can lead to parks, restaurants, places to study, and a rewarding breath of fresh air. By seeing your surroundings at a pedestrian level, you’re more likely to meet people, stay in shape, and get to know your neighborhood – you won’t live on campus forever!

Critical Mass

Critical Mass is a huge monthly biking event in which bikers celebrate their right to the road. This awe-inspiring ride is an example of how people in the Twin Cities are working to promote sustainable transportation in creative ways. To join Critical Mass or to find the next ride, check out: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bicyclelane/>

Food for Thought (and Action)

Contributor: Hannah Rivenburgh

Everyone eats, and everyone wants to eat well. On all scales – from urban “food deserts” where many issues deny access to fresh, healthy, culturally-appropriate food to residents because of race, class, or gender; to in the many countries the world over where rising food prices, desertification, commodity crop dumping to undercut local farmers, poor harvests due to changing weather patterns or high costs of water – have created vast food insecurity. Oftentimes we feel distance and alienated from the sources of our food – it is not only small children that honestly believe that food appears magically in the supermarket! It is clear that a different direction is needed.

Staggering global hunger statistics, coupled with a growing body of evidence revealing a rapidly warming earth, demonstrate how unsustainable the capitalist system of food production currently is. The globalization of industrial food systems and the creation of a worldwide commodity food market has efficiently amassed commodity food crops in the direction of the global North, relying mostly on petrochemical inputs and the exploitation of farm workers, but has left land polluted and many hungry, while simultaneously caused obesity on a grand scale.

A sustainable food system would be able to produce enough food for all people and ensure that all people can access it. Its production would nourish the land instead of depleting it; the soil would be seen as the source of all life, rather than a means to hold up crops. Instead of using fossil fuels, which expend many calories of dirty energy to grow on calorie of food, agriculture would be based on clean, community energy sources.

Although industrial factory farms continue to spread worldwide, people are now seeking fresh food from local farmers. They are breaking away from agri-*business* and returning to agri-*culture*, by

resisting the privatization of seeds, our communal heritage. Demand for safe, pesticide-free working conditions for farm laborers rises.

Sustainable Eating in Café Mac

- Eat less meat: Industrial meat production takes a ridiculous amount of energy and contributes in global warming. Less meat demand means less meat produced.
- Get involved in the Bon Appétit Bon “Low Carbon Diet”
- Make smart food choices: Take small portions at a time to make sure you don’t eat too much or end up with a lot of extra food on your plate. Most importantly, think about how you can avoid food waste in the future.
- Eat local: Think about the origins of your food and how far it has flown to get to your plate. Local food means less transportation and better local economies.
- Bring a reusable travel mug to the Grill for \$1.00 coffee, or ask for real dishes if you are going to eat there so you don’t have to use disposable containers.

The MULCH Garden

Local food gardens are the ultimate source for organic and delicious food! MULCH (Macalester Urban Land and Community Health) maintains a community garden located near the language houses. Working with soil and growing things is an avenue for connection, empowerment, and joy.

You can visit the garden anytime or help out on workdays, which will be advertised as they occur.



Towards Zero Waste

Contributors: Terence Steinberg and Austin Werth

“We don’t have any throw-away species or resources, and we don’t have any throw-away children or neighborhoods either. All of creation is precious, and we are all in this together.”

– Van Jones, President of the Ella Baker Center in Oakland, CA

All of our world’s resources have worth in the purposes they serve, the lives they support, or the beauty they contribute. All humans, animals, plants, drops of water or bits of dirt have some importance, especially because none exist in unlimited quantities. When we waste such resources, we lose incredible opportunities.

In our segregated societies, we don’t see where we throw trash “away” to or who is affected by it, but there is a significant link between “disposable materials” and so-called “disposable people.” Low-income communities and communities of color, most of which have been hit hard by economic or social forces, are generally always the first to receive society’s trash – physically and metaphorically.

A different framework is the “cradle-to-cradle” concept. Rather than seeing our materials and our people from a life-to-death standpoint, where they begin as natural resources and end in the landfill, we can see their continual usefulness, which may change but will never cease to exist. In this light, our work becomes most important when it creates or re-establishes value where it has been lost or disregarded.

The Macalester Zero Waste committee is made up of a diverse set of staff and students oriented towards the goal of making Zero Waste a reality on campus. The committee has sought to facilitate college-wide waste reduction through many means, most notably by supporting the reconfiguration of Macalester’s recycling program on campus and discussing the potential for composting at Café Mac.

Creating a Zero Waste Culture

REDUCE: Make conscious choices about what you buy, how you buy it and what you do with it. Don't buy what you already have or what you can borrow from someone else. If you do invest in something, make sure it is reusable, not disposable. If you do buy, buy used.

REUSE: Once your items have served their primary use, let your creativity flow and try something new with them!

RECYCLE: When your options for reuse have run dry, make every effort to recycle what you can. Use the recycling receptacles around campus to dispose of paper, cardboard, bottles and cans. For other recyclable materials, such as batteries, cell phones and CFL bulbs, check out www.greenguardian.com.

Other Tips:

- Remember that Macalester trash goes to a waste incinerator
- Bring a canvas bag when you go shopping.
- Bring a reusable takeout container to restaurants.
- Buy products in bulk to reduce packaging.
- Avoid bottled water – fill a reusable water bottle instead.
- Print everything double-sided and edit papers on computers

Recycling at Macalester

37% of the “garbage” at Macalester is recyclable. Right now, Macalester has an overall recycling rate of only 24%, whereas some recycling programs are known to have recycling rates upwards of 40-50%.

Macalester partnered with Eureka Recycling and a student intern in Fall 2007 to conduct a waste audit of campus, coming up with a report and a series of recommendations that lead to an increase in recycling containers with better labels on campus. The recycling program will continue to explore ways to reduce the campus's waste load.

Inclusive Relationships and Community

Contributors: David Seitz and Danni Sigwalt

Each of us brings experiences shaped in part by our many overlapping identities, including race, class, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, age, citizenship, nationality, religion. These categories name some of the ways we experience privilege and/or oppression on a day-to-day basis.

Systems of racism, classism, sexism, cissexism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, nationalism and other forms of oppression work together to justify inequalities in access to resources and our collective and personal wellbeing. They are all closely linked. Working for sustainable ways of living with one another and the Earth necessitates that we challenge all systems of oppression.

Building sustainable relationships demands of each of us to examine and interrogate our own forms of privilege and the ways in which we experience oppression. Being an ally means caring about our friends, and using our privilege, when and where we have it to ask questions about who's at the table.

Relationship building, of course, also takes a lot of "self-work." Being an ally also means asking questions about one's own life, upbringing and way of interacting with other people and sharing resources.

What Does This Look Like in Practice?

Taking courses that engage with the lived experiences of people experiencing and resisting oppression – including many courses in such departments as American Studies; Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; History; and Humanities, Media, and Cultural Studies.

Showing up for conversations and organizing that confronts systems of oppression and works for global justice. Each of our identities

are shaped by these interlocking oppressions, and so the work for liberation affects us all.

Building authentic relationships and nurturing our understanding of how our identities impact and shape our relationships. This means asking: How can I be an ally – in the ways that I have privilege and access – to my friends – in the ways that they might not?

Doing our own work to hear – and only then, work alongside – people experiencing oppressions. This means reading and engaging on our own time, out of our own sense of commitment. It’s not about “giving voice to the voiceless,” it’s about hearing voices that are already present.

Example: In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre

This local **community-based theatre** explores themes of justice and injustice through beautiful, hand-made masks and puppets. The ongoing project, “Invigorate the Common Well,” which includes a rally and three performance pieces, engages audiences by exploring the local realities of resources and access, and community-based challenges to water injustices.

The theatre also produces the Minneapolis parade for **May Day**, a joyful worldwide protest of economic justice. Today, Minneapolis’s May Day celebration is the largest in the world. Many Mac students have performed, interned, and supported this cultural center and social change agent.

In the Heart of the Beast
1500 East Lake Street, Minneapolis
www.hobt.org / 612-721-2535

The Task Ahead

Contributors: Matt Kazinka and Jason Rodney

This guidebook was made to demonstrate the timeliness of sustainability and to harness the energy around our collective realization that it is the only way forward. It is very intentionally designed to begin important discussions and inspire necessary action.

How will we do all of this? The only way possible is through collaboration and creativity. When we, as the student body, as passionate activists, as concerned citizens, or as close friends, put our minds and hands together on something, we are *absolute rock stars*.

What you learn and practice at Macalester is applicable beyond campus because we are already in the “real world.” Preparing ourselves for the future puts us behind the times but engaging in *now* prepares the future for *us*. The action that we take in college should not only serve to transform us, but transform the world around us.

Sustainable activism is the recognition that power is not a limited resource; we have the power to act and that as we inspire others and connect to them, our power grows. The truth is that we’re only really going to move forward when we transcend the oppositional frame of *us* versus *them*. Its one world: either we collectively win or we collectively lose.

We think it is best to look at our time at Macalester and its many academic disciplines, student organizations and opportunities not as a series of roofs to fit within but as platforms upon which we create. No matter what major(s) or entry point(s) you choose, the world we need and want is one, and we can all lift each other up.

Plugging In

So, if you've read through all of this, we hope you are pondering the million dollar question: *Where do I fit in?* Well, we can't tell you an exact location, time, or date to meet, but we may be able to provide ideas on how you can start the process.

Find the people and organizations you can work with. Check out all the different student organizations working for a sustainable world that sound interesting to you. Different orgs may have different styles and focuses, but most are seeking a common good. See what fits for you – but don't stop trying new groups and expanding your own understanding.

Take a variety of classes from different disciplines. As a challenge, start connecting your classes to each other in your head and your assignments. You'll start to see how it all fits together. The Sustainability Office has a database of potential paper or research topics if you are unsure what useful information you might be interested in. (www.macalaster.edu/sustainability)

Don't stop questioning and seeking. This booklet, by nature, is not capable of capturing most of the steps needed for us to create a sustainable world, and heck, we very well might get it wrong. Develop a critical mind so that you can find the ideas and methods that fit your ideals.

Find projects to plug into – or start your own. Remember that the world will not wait for any of us to find the perfect solution, and that, as much as strategy and planning is necessary, the enactment of our ideas and beliefs is what matters. The more you integrate your activism with your education, the more you will get out of both. Dream and do.

“We thrive and survive on planet earth as a single human family. And one of our main responsibilities is to leave to successor generations a sustainable future.” – Kofi A. Annan, '61

WELCOME
TO
MACALESTER

